

Title: The Geriatric Flying Squad: an alternative to hospital transfer for acutely unwell older people living in aged care facilities.

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The Southcare Geriatric Flying Squad (GFS) is a rapid response community service for acutely unwell older people living in residential aged care facilities (RACF's). This health service is an alternative to transfers to the emergency department and hospital admissions for older people whose preference is treatment at home in the RACF. The GFS supports the older person's choice when not for transfer to hospital does not mean 'not for treatment'. The GFS is available to 27 RACF's for almost 3000 frail, older people in the southern area of Sydney, Australia. The GFS includes two geriatricians, two nurse practitioners (NP), one transitional nurse practitioner (TNP) and one clinical nurse consultant (CNC) who all work part-time. The GFS is a seven day service, with one geriatrician working four hours per day Monday to Friday, the CNC works three days per week and one NP or TNP covers the service twelve hours per day. The success of the service is heavily dependent on the 'advanced practice nursing' skills of the nurse practitioner or transitional nurse practitioner framed by a collaborative arrangement with the geriatricians of the GFS and hospital on-call geriatricians. Since the service began in 2011, the GFS has treated 3,180 patients and sustained a hospital avoidance of over 90%. Since integrated data collection began in July 2014, the GFS has treated 2,103 patients with episodes of care averaging 4.5 days, providing 4,895 direct reviews and 8,162 indirect follow up checks (GFS database, The Sutherland Hospital, Southcare).

The nurse practitioner assesses the patient and makes autonomous decisions related to patient investigations and treatment within his/her scope of practice, as well as having the advantage of medical consultative support from a geriatrician when needed.

Biography

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2. Ashcraft, A., Owen, D. 2014. From nursing home to acute care: signs, symptoms, and strategies used to prevent transfer. Geriatric Nursing. 35, 316-320.

3. Jain, S., Gonski, P., Jarick, J., Frese, S., Gerrard, S. 2018. Southcare Geriatric Flying Squad: an innovative Australian model providing acute care in residential aged care facilities. Internal Medicine Journal. 48:1, p88-91.
4. Joanna Briggs Institute. 2010. Effectiveness of Nurse Practitioners in residential aged care facilities. Best Practice: evidence-based information sheets for health professionals. 14(19):1-4.

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